

## Warren County Board of Supervisors

**Committee:**           **Social Services**

**Date:**                   **March 22, 2013**

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**Committee Members Present:**

Supervisors Loeb  
                  Kenny  
                  Bentley  
                  Strainer  
                  Wood  
                  Sokol  
                  Westcott

**Others Present:**

Representing the Department of Social Services:  
                  Suzanne Wheeler, Commissioner  
                  Julie Montero, Fiscal Manager  
Deanna Park, Director, Countryside Adult Home  
Paul Dusek, County Administrator  
JoAnn McKinstry, Assistant to the County  
                  Administrator  
Amanda Allen, Deputy Clerk of the Board  
Supervisors Conover  
                  Frasier  
                  Mason  
                  McDevitt  
                  Taylor  
                  Vanselow  
Amy Clute, Administrator, Self-Insurance  
Julie Pacyna, Purchasing Agent  
Don Lehman, *The Post Star*  
Thom Randall, *Adirondack Journal*  
Nicole Livingston, Second Deputy Clerk

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Mr. Loeb called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 10:40 a.m.

Motion was made by Mrs. Wood, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2013 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Deanna Park, Director of Countryside Adult Home, who distributed copies of her agenda to the Committee members; a copy of the agenda is also on file with the minutes.

Commencing the Action Agenda review, Ms. Park presented a request to fill a part-time Institutional Aide position, 32 hours per week, annual salary of \$24,715, due to retirement. She noted the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) required one Institutional Aide per 40 residents and this would assist them in meeting that requirement. She added there would be an approximate savings of \$1,639 per year.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position as outlined above, and to refer the same to the Personnel Committee. A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the minutes.

Under the Old Business portion of the Agenda, Ms. Park stated the Committee was to review the full report that was prepared two years ago relative to the operations of Countryside Adult Home.

Mr. Kenny referenced the handout distributed entitled "Countryside Adult Home Financial Analysis 2013", a copy of which is on file with the minutes. He referred to page 4, the section labeled 'Probable costs associated with closing', and noted it listed unemployment for 26 weeks would cost approximately \$165,312. He questioned if that was assuming that no one would be employed and JoAnn McKinstry, Assistant to the County Administrator, replied affirmatively. Mr. Kenny pointed out that some people would be employed and therefore that cost could be less and Mrs. McKinstry agreed. Mr. Kenny asked about the 'Assumed alternate housing costs', projected at \$92,163, and wondered if that was assuming that no one would go into a nursing home and Mrs. McKinstry explained that was based on a certain number of residents that would not go into a nursing home and the \$92,163 was the estimated cost to the County to house them elsewhere.

Mr. Kenny expounded at this level of decision making, all emotional issues must be put aside and he stated he did not see how the County could continue to operate Countryside Adult Home at a loss of \$560,000 for 40 people. He recalled that for several years he had been requesting an analysis of all optional services provided by the County, prioritized by which ones could be eliminated. He opined it would be fiscally irresponsible of the County to continue with this endeavor.

Mr. Westcott expressed his support of Mr. Kenny's remarks and agreed that the suggested analysis should be prepared. He also requested more information with regard to how and where the current residents would be placed if the County elected to sell the facility.

Paul Dusek, County Administrator, advised it would be difficult to provide that type of information because it would be based on the individual decisions of those that were currently residing there and the County would be getting into personal matters with the residents. He noted there were alternate living facilities available for these individuals and it would be the responsibility of the County to locate and assist with securing such if they decided to close the facility. He asserted this was a more global issue in terms of whether or not the Board of Supervisors conceptually wanted to operate this type of facility.

Mr. Bentley pointed out that the continuing costs to operate Countryside Adult Home would still be \$250,000 a year for years to come and therefore the true cost to the County would be \$250,000 as opposed to approximately \$500,000 as previously mentioned. Mrs. Wood asserted that over time, the costs would continue to rise at the facility and she added that she was in favor of seriously examining Countryside Adult Home further. She recalled individuals from the private sector had reviewed the operations of the facility and they had advised to continue operations in this manner would not be feasible. Mr. Strainer recalled that the review by the private sector also highlighted that the biggest problem was the salaries of the employees; however, he said, if the facility were closed, he believed the building would deteriorate and need to be demolished which would still involve significant costs to the County. He commented that it cost each County taxpayer \$8 a year to operate this facility, noting that he paid \$144 a year for Crandall Library which he did not use but he did believe the community needed it. Mr. Strainer asserted he disagreed with the idea of closing Countryside Adult Home. Mr. Sokol opined it was not fair to the residents at Countryside Adult Home to

continue to bring up the idea of closing the facility every year and a decision needed to be made with regard to its' future. Mr. Kenny reiterated that each year the deficit at Countryside Adult Home would be greater and the County budget would be even more difficult next year than it was this year. He agreed it was unfortunate that they were considering closing the facility and he acknowledged that Ms. Park did an outstanding job as the Administrator of the facility. Mrs. Wood questioned what would happen with the Meal Site that was recently relocated to the facility and noted she would be interested in reviewing the options associated with that. Mr. Westcott requested a side-by-side comparison of what the future of the facility would be if the County continued to operate it with the incurred losses versus sale of the facility and the necessary continued investments that the County would be responsible for and how that would be handled. Mr. Dusek responded he could provide an anticipated future cost for a five year time frame; however, he said, realistically he did not foresee the facility being purchased to continue operations as an adult home. He added the objective would be to find someone interested in purchasing the building for any type of use. Mr. Dusek mentioned if the decision was made to close the facility, it would most likely take at least one year to implement such action which would allow adequate time to relocate the Meal Site, and he noted the Meal Site had been moved to Countryside Adult Home in an attempt to fully utilize the facility. Mr. Strainer remarked there had been no other options in the Town of Warrensburg for the location of the Meal Site.

Mr. Taylor stated that the successful bidder relative to the sale of Westmount Health Facility could be part of the solution for Countryside Adult Home, as well, which was something that should be considered.

Mr. Loeb apprised the cost history of Countryside Adult Home had been steady for the past five years and he did not anticipate anything catastrophic in the years to come. He expressed his opinion that the County not only had a legal obligation, but as a community, there was a moral obligation to maintain this facility. Society, he continued, as a population constantly offered more people that could be potential residents at the facility. He requested a resolution be made to either support the operations of Countryside Adult Home or to close it. He noted the repeat discussions were unsettling to the residents and the employees of the facility.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mr. Strainer to support the operations of Countryside Adult Home and the services it provided to Warren County.

Mr. McDevitt agreed with Mr. Taylor's statements and suggested that any action relative to Countryside Adult Home be deferred for 90 days until the Westmount Health Facility matter was resolved. Mr. Vanselow expressed his opinion that there was much more involved in this decision than money and pointed out his mother lived at Countryside Adult Home. He further stated there was a significant difference in the quality of life for the residents at the facility compared to those at a nursing home. He expounded that the County had an obligation to provide some type of care for these individuals. Mr. Vanselow added that if these individuals were relocated to nursing homes, their families may have to travel an hour or more to visit them, creating an unnecessary burden on the families of the residents of the facility. He expressed his opinion that the Supervisors had an obligation to the residents of the County to provide some type of care for individuals

when their families could no longer do so. He advised the County needed to look beyond money in this situation and at what the people of this County expected from the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Kenny mentioned that he did not see how the sale of Westmount Health Facility related to the closing of Countryside Adult Home and he felt if it were advertised that the County was considering closing the facility, any interested parties would come forward with offers. Mr. Sokol advised he was not comfortable voting to close the facility at this time and he believed there could be options involved with the sale of Westmount Health Facility. He agreed that it would be prudent to delay the decision to close Countryside Adult Home as suggested by Mr. Taylor. Mr. Westcott added he would like to get a better feeling for the numbers with regard to the operations of Countryside Adult Home before making a final decision, noting he took to heart Mr. Vanselow's comments and he expressed his own concern for the residents there.

Mr. Loeb called the question and the motion was carried by majority vote, with Messrs. Kenny, Westcott and Mrs. Wood voting in opposition, to support the concept of continuing the operations of Countryside Adult Home and the services it provided to Warren County. The necessary resolution was authorized for the April 19, 2013 Board meeting.

Under Topics for Discussion, Ms. Park advised there were 128.7 overtime hours for the past two pay cycles, which was an increase of 77.3 hours from last year's figures. The current census, she said, was 42 residents comprised of 14 men and 28 women. She informed they had received 8 referrals this month and she listed them as follows: one for the day care program, one new admission, three were pending admission, one was not interested in placement at this time, one would be evaluated next week and one required nursing home level of care. She added there were 4 admissions and 2 discharges for the month. Ms. Park pointed out she had provided additional information in the Agenda packet regarding Countryside Adult Home, including the issue of where residents would go, as well as the Annual Report and the second citation free survey from the NYS DOH which she accredited to the hard work and dedication of the staff.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Suzanne Wheeler, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), who distributed copies of her agenda to the Committee members; a copy of the agenda is also on file with the minutes.

Commissioner Wheeler apprised the Team Player for the month of February was Ann Hayden, Social Welfare Examiner in the Temporary Assistance (TA)/Welfare to Work (WTW) Unit and the Team Leader was Janet Trackey, Senior Social Welfare Examiner in the TA/WTW Unit; however, she said, neither one was able to attend the meeting today. She mentioned that Ms. Hayden had since been promoted to a Senior Social Welfare Examiner in the Managed Care Unit. She noted that the Agenda included praising comments from Ms. Haydens' and Ms. Trackeys' coworkers.

The next item on the Agenda, Commissioner Wheeler informed, was the Information and

Education piece and this month Katherine Chambers, Director of Youth Court, would be providing an update on the Warren County Youth Court. Ms. Chambers distributed a handout to the Committee members entitled "Warren County Youth Court 2012 End of Year", a copy of which is on file with the minutes. She commented there had been a decrease in the number of referrals for 2012 which was attributed to a decrease in juvenile arrests. One significant change this year, she continued, was the number of teens being charged with reckless driving. Ms. Chambers reviewed the handout in detail. Commissioner Wheeler mentioned that included in the Agenda was another document that summarized the benefits of Youth Court and the impacts that would be realized without Youth Court.

Continuing the Agenda review with Action Items, Commissioner Wheeler stated Item A was a request to extend and amend the Youth Bureau contract with the Council for Prevention to provide Youth Court services through December 2013, for an amount not to exceed \$50,875. She noted there was a reduction in cost from last year. She mentioned Item B related to this contract and was a request to amend the 2013 County budget to decrease estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$1,445 due to a decrease in revenues from the New York State Youth Development and Delinquency Program, as well as a decrease in contract expenses for Youth Court.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve Items A and B as outlined above, and to refer the request to amend the 2013 County budget to the Finance Committee. The necessary resolution was authorized for the April 19, 2013 Board meeting. Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes.

Commissioner Wheeler advised Item C was a request to amend the 2013 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$4,531.03 to cover the cost of automobile repairs where insurance recoveries had been received.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the 2013 County budget as outlined above, and to refer the same to the Finance Committee. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Item D, Commissioner Wheeler said, was a request to fill the vacant position of Caseworker #2, annual salary of \$35,385, due to retirement and to backfill any vacancies resulting from promotions.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position, as well as any backfills resulting from promotion, as outlined above, and to refer the same to the Personnel Committee. A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the minutes.

Commissioner Wheeler stated Item E was a request to fill the vacant position of Medicaid

Clerk #1, annual salary of \$26,370, due to a death and to backfill any vacancies resulting from promotions.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position, as well as any backfills resulting from promotion, as outlined above, and to refer the same to the Personnel Committee. A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the minutes.

Commissioner Wheeler asserted Item F was a request to fill the vacant position of Social Welfare Examiner #1, annual salary of \$30,230, due to resignation and to backfill any vacancies resulting from promotions.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Westcott and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position, as well as any backfills resulting from promotion, as outlined above, and to refer the same to the Personnel Committee. A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the minutes.

Commissioner Wheeler apprised Item G was a request for a Senior Social Welfare Examiner to attend Case Processing Review Training for NTA-SNAP Supervisors in Albany, New York on April 16-19, 2013. She added Item H was a request for three Social Welfare Examiners to attend the Institute for Temporary Assistance Programs B1 in Albany, New York on April 8-12, 2013 and April 22-26, 2013.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the requests to attend training as outlined above. Copies of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention forms are on file with the minutes.

Concluding the Agenda review, Commissioner Wheeler referred to the Overtime Analysis included in the Agenda and noted there was a slight increase compared to last year. She pointed out the Budget Analysis was also included for the Committee's review.

There being no further business to come before the Social Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mr. Westcott, Mr. Loeb adjourned the meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Livingston, Second Deputy Clerk